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SPEECH

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OF

MR. WENTWORTH, OF ILLINOIS,

ON

THE OREGON TERRITORY:

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

JANUARY 24, 1844.

WASHINGTON:

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1844.

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SPEECH.

Mr. WENTWORTH addressed the House as follows:

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was writing at my desk, on urgent business of my constituents, when my honorable friend from Kentucky [Mr. THOMASSON] arose; and nothing was further from my intentions than addressing the House to-day. I was much pleased—highly delighted—with the patriotic sentiments of my friend from Indiana, [Mr. OWEN;] and I supposed that the gentleman from Kentucky arose for no other purpose than also to sustain the cause of justice and humanity—to vindicate the settlers' rights against Indian cruelties and British encroachments. But I must confess that I never was more surprised in my whole life than at the whole tenor of his remarks, so entirely repugnant are they to the oft-repeated and well-known sentiments and feelings of the whole western people, and to the honor and dignity of our nation. And what may well add surprise to surprise, is the fact that he has said all he has, after acknowledging that Oregon was ours by right—that our title to it was clear and indisputable. And what title could be more so? We have it, first, by prior discovery under Captain Gray in 1792, one year before Great Britain's pretended discovery under Captain McKensie; and second, by prior possession under Lewis and Clark in November, 1804, whilst the pretended possession of Great Britain under Mr. Thompson was not until 1806; and, according to the law of nations, there can be no clearer title than that of prior discovery, followed by prior possession. But our title is still more strongly fortified by our succession to the French and Spanish titles, under the Louisiana and Florida treaties; and no impartial person can examine the claims of these two governments, and especially those of Spain, without acknowledging them paramount to those of Great Britain. Oregon, then, is ours—first, by our own right; second, by that of France; third, by that of Spain, which has subsequently been endorsed by Mexico. Again: by the treaty of Ghent, such places as were taken during the last war were to be restored. The town at the mouth of the Columbia, founded by John Jacob

Astor in 1811, and called Astoria, was taken in the last war by Captain Blake, in December, 1813; and so it was formally restored to the United States October 16, 1818, under this treaty. This shows how England regarded the matter at that time. It is proof positive that she thought it ours. Now what has she done to gain a title since? Russia has conceded our right to 54 degrees and 40 minutes north latitude, which brings Russia forward to strengthen our title; and Spain concedes us all above 42 degrees. And the value of this concession, I ought, perhaps, to enlarge upon, as it embraces the discovery of Cape Blanco, in 1543, as far north as latitude 43 degrees; of the straits of Fuca, in latitude 49 to 51, in 1592, by Juan de Fuca; of the river Umpqua, in 1603, by Aguilier, in latitude 44; of Nootka sound, by Perez and Martinez, in 1774, in latitude 49 to 50; and of Cape Disappointment, in 1775, by a company of Spaniards, in latitude 46. The right of these discoveries, outweighing any of Great Britain, was conceded to us by the Florida treaty of February 22, 1819, and confirmed by the treaty with Mexico, January 12, 1828. Bissett, the English historian and successor to Hume, in naming the various tracts of country belonging to England in 1763, does not mention Oregon; and yet her diplomatists claim she got possession by the discovery of Sir Francis Drake, in 1579, almost two centuries before. And there are maps yet extant, published by Eman Bowen, geographer to his Majesty, in which all the territory west of what was then the French territory, (as discovered by La Salle, in 1683, embracing all the country from the head waters of the Mississippi to its mouth,) and extending to the Pacific ocean, was set down as belonging to Spain. This shows that the English claim must have arisen since 1763. And it evidently had no claim then; for, in his voyage, he never went as high as 40 degrees of latitude, and that would only give England California, to which she has never made a pretence of claim. And it is only until we consented to her joint occupancy, and offered her all above 49 degrees, that she has begun to study the log-books of early navigators to make out a title to

the whole. And this is all any nation can gain by compromising its right for the sake of peace with Great Britain.

Thus we have a tract of country embracing twelve degrees and forty minutes, secured to us by a title so strong that I do not well see how it could be stronger. But 'will let the title pass. It is enough for me that the gentleman has acknowledged our right to the country. Now, sir, why not defend that right? After knowing what our rights are, how long shall we see them trampled upon before we arouse to their defence? How long are the emissaries of the Hudson's Bay company to maraud the plains of Oregon, part and parcel of our common country, oppressing the hardy pioneer in American enterprise, and we, the framers of our country's laws—the guardians of our country's rights—remain listless and inactive? How much further, under the encouragement of her old ally, Great Britain, are the Indians to extend their depredations upon American property and American life without an indignant response from the American Congress? There are not only dwelling houses and missionary stations in Oregon, but churches and school houses. And who can tell how many of these may have been burnt to the ground, or stained by the blood of massacred American citizens, through the cruelties of our ancient and allied foes, (Great Britain and the Indians,) whilst the gentleman was making his temporizing speech? Ay, sir, who can tell what outrages are perpetrated there, from day to day, upon American soil, and upon American citizens, under the sanction of laws? But what laws? The laws of the United States? Those we have never given them. In vain does the poor Oregon settler ask for a trial by the laws of his country. In vain does he ask for a judge or a jury. And, further yet, in vain does he ask for the protection of the American flag—a boon not denied one of our citizens in almost any other portion of the world. But how are they tried? By British laws, or by the British constitution? No, sir. Have they the advantages of even the old common law? No, sir. How, then, are they tried? Why, by the whims and caprices of the Hudson Bay company, which varies its laws to suit the times, the occasions, and the cases; which follow the old Scotch Jedburgh fashion—hang first, and try afterwards. To do justice to Great Britain, I will state that she has enacted a few laws in relation to Oregon; and one of these provides that the Hudson Bay company have power to give judgment against any American citizen in Oregon, and issue an execution, under cover of which he may be confined in their forts, or sent to the jails of Canada, at their pleasure. So, when they do not want to try and punish American citizens on American territory, without law, or by mob law, made on the spot, for fear of outraging public feeling, they will kidnap them, and take them to a British colony, to be tried by British judges and British laws. Now, under this state of things, we ask that a territorial government be sent them; we ask for them laws, judges, and jurors; to all of which, every American citizen, however humble his condition, and however distant his abode, is justly entitled. But if they cannot have these, as the scantiest pittance—as the least act of grace on the part of our government—we ask only the protection of the American flag. And what less can we ask for those daring adventurers who, "*ducti amore patriæ*," sacrificing all the endearments of their early homes, and all the gay delights of the social and fashionable circles, count their lives as

nothing in the midst of their determination to extend the bounds of American civilization, and plant the cross of Christ on the shores of the Pacific?

Mr. Chairman, when we have ascertained our rights, then is just the time to resent any encroachment upon them. Such was the governing sentiment of our patriotic forefathers in 1774, who thought not a moment of the power—the tremendous power—of their mother country, when they found her the aggressor—when they found her in the wrong, and they themselves in the right. And if poor as they then were, both as States and individuals; if weak as they then were in every respect; if unprotected as they then were against the Indians on one side, and Great Britain on the other, they dared strike for their rights, can we long hesitate as to our duty? Shall it be said that, ere the last revolutioner has gone down to his grave, this nation will condescend to tamper, to parley, to use the language of weakness and timidity, when a tract of country, embracing one-fourth more than the original thirteen States, is at stake? And that, too, because the gentleman has told us, England is powerful and more prepared for war than we are. But what consists this great, this formidable power of England, sufficient, in the mind of the gentleman, to stifle the voice of our people, to paralyze the action of this body on so important a question as this? Like the millionaires of 1836, England makes great show on paper. She has possessions beyond count; but, like those millionaires, she has lived on that bubble, expanded credit, and she is about out of funds. Her citizens at home, who sweat and blood she has so long and so severely taxed, are becoming factious and disorderly, while her colonists are bearing her yoke very impatiently. She is in debt beyond her means or expectations ever to pay; and each year she adds to it. Her strength is anywhere else than where it ought to be in the affections of her people. And here, sir, the impregnable fortress of the American government. Her people love it, and will sacrifice the all to defend it. But here Great Britain is weak. The people upon whom she relies for defence are groaning under innumerable cruelties and oppressions; and if they fight at all, it will be from compulsion and for pay, rather than love. And the value of such soldiers against men fighting for their inalienable rights, the struggle for our independence fully tested. England has little to gain even, at being going to war with us, and much, very much to lose; and she has no idea of it. She has not enough of wars with the United States, where she always gets worsted. She prefers negotiations, while she always beats us. Hence we find her not willing to fight for, but to negotiate for, Oregon. Having no title to this desirable tract of country, she pretends one, and modestly claims the whole. But in this enlightened Christian age, she does not wish to go to war, and propose compromise. And thus far she has been very fortunate; for already has an American Secretary of State (Mr. Clay, in 1826) instructed one of our ministers (Mr. Gallatin) to offer to give her all above 49 degrees so as to make our boundary west of the mountains run parallel with that east—a surrender of 50 and 40 min.—almost half the country; and this, after he had written that Great Britain could make out a colorable title to any portion of the northwest coast. She, however, in her complacency, offered to give us all below the centre of the navigable current of the Columbia at its mouth.

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a line extended easterly parallel thereto, which (call-
ing the mouth 46 deg. and 10 min.) would give us a
little over 4 deg.—not quite one third. She negotiates
under every advantage, since every degree, every
minute, every second, will be so much clear gain.
Her conduct in this matter reminds me of the desper-
ation of a hard-faced gambler, who, after he had
lost his last cent of thousands, proposed to the win-
ner to flip up a copper, and see who should have the
whole pile of money on the table; and, when the
winner, in the phrensy of the moment, consented,
and the copper was in the air, he exclaimed, "Now,
heads, I win; tails, you lose." Sir, this is much the
way England plays with us. When she first sat
down to negotiate for a portion of the State of
Maine, she pretended to have no right whatever to
that which she at last got; but was willing to pur-
chase it. We were not willing to sell on her terms.
Nevertheless, she kept negotiating and negotiating
until she got all she wanted. To be sure, it is said
we got other territory in payment; but that territory
was ours, too. She took our property, and traded
with us for more of our property, and cheated us in
the bargain.

Sir, the greatest mistake that our country ever
made was in not insisting fully upon the line of
1783. Every deviation from it has so far been cal-
amitous to our best interests, whenever we have
come fully to understand them. England has been
too long skilled in diplomacy for us to think
of playing evenhanded with her; and hence,
before the stakes are down, I am for limiting
our agents, and it is on this very account that
western members wish to provoke discussion
upon this Oregon question. We wish to show the
importance we attach to the great valley of the Co-
lumbia, so that, if men trade it away, they may be
aware of the consequences. We have once offered
to Great Britain, in an unwary moment, to the for-
ty-ninth parallel. But who dare, sir, say on this
floor, that our people will warrant or sanction that
offer again; or an offer to surrender a single inch of
that country? The gentleman has said that this is
not the time to act upon this matter. Sir, I beg
leave to differ with him; and assign, as the very rea-
son why we should act upon it, the one which he
gives for not acting. He says a negotiation is about
to be opened with respect to Oregon. Well, sir, it will
be mere child's play—empty words alone—to dis-
cuss the matter after the negotiation is closed, the
treaty ratified, and, perhaps, half of Oregon given
away. What avails it to discuss the Ashburton
treaty now? Like it, or not like it, we cannot help
ourselves; and, though disapproved by nine-tenths
of the people who understand it, they have no other
resort but to sanction it as they would the de-
crees of Omnipotence. The fiat has gone forth, and
no one can stay it. This may soon be the case
with Oregon; and now is the time, just the time, the
urgent time, to speak out and declare our sentiments,
ere diplomacy may have done its work. And speak
we will. Sir, ever since this session commenced,
we have been introducing proposition after proposi-
tion on this subject. But, until this time, our inge-
nuity has only been able to keep pace with that of
the honorable gentlemen opposed to us, in silently
disposing of them all as fast as we could introduce
them. I will tell the House that the West has come
here united to a man upon this subject; (I extremely
regret, however, to except the honorable gentleman
from Kentucky.) And we intend to speak out upon
every possible occasion to arouse this House to a

sense of its duty, and to awake the furthestmost
regions of our country to our right to every inch of
Oregon; that, knowing our rights, there may be a
common rush to their defence, and a common in-
dignation for him who may treat them away, or
a Senate who may ratify any such treaty. And
we thus speak in advance, because it is the
only speaking that will prove effectual. For,
when once negotiated away, the unanimous
voice of the House—the unanimous voice of every
legislature—ay, the unanimous voice of the whole
American people cannot recall it. It is gone forever.
To the friends of Oregon, then, this is not the time
for silence. The question now pending is to give
the year's notice required by the second article of the
convention of 1827—to wit: that we wish to close the
joint occupancy; for such it has been called, though
lately England has had the country all to herself.
This vote should pass this House before the British
minister arrives, and then he will know somewhat
of the opinions and determinations of our people;
and then he and our treaty-making powers can
shape their course accordingly. The gentleman from
Kentucky has descanted on our weakness, as well
as the strength of Great Britain, who, he thinks, will
be provoked to war by any such vote as the one we
recommend. He thinks we had better wait ten
years, and the Oregon settlers will have so multipli-
ed and strengthened themselves that they could take
the country without help. Sir, I wonder that this
modern temporizing policy never suggested itself to
our sagacious forefathers. It was a rash act, throw-
ing that tea overboard in the Charlestown harbor!
The battle of Bunker Hill was entirely too early,
besides being contrary to the law and constitution!
Our revolutionary sires were too precipitate alto-
gether! Had they waited ten years, perhaps Eng-
land would have given up the country without fight-
ing for it! And there were men in those days who
cried out, "we are weak," and wanted to wait a while.
But the gallant Patrick Henry replied: "We are
weak, but when shall we be stronger? Will it be
next week or next year?" Apply this to Oregon.
When will we be better able to take possession of
it? Will it be when Great Britain shall have over-
run it with her troops, armed every Indian, and
built and manned a fort in every important position?
Every day's delay, in my opinion, only makes that
territory the more difficult for us to take possession
of. And the very remarks of the gentleman, as
coming from an American congressman, will but
kindle new ardor in British breasts, and make that
government still more haughty and imperative in its
requisitions. They were very impolitic, to say the
least, at this time; and I think he should not have
uttered them, under the circumstances, though he
believed them true. I wonder this advice—"wait
ten years"—was not thought of before our last war,
when England was nabbing our gallant seamen. In-
deed, there were those then that not only cried
"wait, don't make war with the mighty kingdom
of England;" but who even went further, and refused
to vote appropriations for the war; and further yet,
who fed, for pay, clandestinely, the British army. I
hope, if gentlemen are not going to aid us in getting
Oregon, they are not going to join the other side,
and aid Britain to it. Wait ten years! Away with
the proposition! Humanity revolts at it. It re-
minds me of a certain American statesman, who, in
his moments of patriotic feeling, indignant at his
country's wrongs, wanted a war by the 4th of July;
afterwards, cold-blooded policy got possession of

him, and he explained it away by saying that he meant some future 4th of July. Sir, when we shall have awaited these ten years, I fear gentlemen will be as little ready to mete out justice to the hardy pioneer of Oregon as they now are.

The gentleman from Kentucky has told us, that the land in Oregon is poor and sterile. He has talked of barren hills and sandy wastes. But, in the name of patriotism, I ask, what portion of our country is so poor, is possessed by a tenant so mean, that we are not bound to defend it? What land so worthless as to be basely surrendered? Though Oregon might not be worth a single penny, when a nation talks of forcibly taking it, I contend we are as much bound to defend it as we are the spot upon which we now stand. This is all our country; and the fact that it is so, should make every inch of it valuable, worth fighting for, rather than to be basely surrendered at the demand of any nation. The gentleman ought to see that land of mountain-rock which our forefathers defended. At any rate, he has read of the heroes and sages which it has produced. What he calls the "barren wastes of Oregon" may yet be tenanted by patriotic, virtuous, and intelligent persons. We intend, however, that they shall be free citizens of the United States, and not the subjects of Great Britain. But the gentleman is mistaken, altogether mistaken, in his character of the country. It is the most inviting land in the world; a very garden of Eden. As might be expected, much of the best of the land is in that portion claimed by Great Britain, and much of the poorest in that she allows us. It is natural, it is characteristic, that she should want all the juice herself, and leave the rind alone to us. But, poor as any portion may be, it is all worth protecting against British invasion, because it is all our right. And here the remark suggests itself, as showing how very kindly she will allow us the shells if she can only get the oyster, that England acknowledges that there is not a single good harbor south of the Columbia, and yet north of our line of forty-two degrees. So, as has been suggested by my friend from Indiana, [Mr. OWEN,] she, with great ostensible kindness, offers us the harbor of Port Discovery, in Fuca's inlet, and a small rocky isthmus, lying southeast from Cape Flattery, both north of the Columbia. These, he well says, are of no account. But, however little or much they may be worth, they are both ours now, as well as the mouth of the Columbia; and, though the game was well played by Lord Ashburton with the Maine people, the West will never allow persons to steal their oxen, and then impudently come and trade them off for their horses. For, in the law of nations, nothing is more definitely settled, than that the nation who discovers the mouth of a river is entitled to all the land that is watered by that river, its tributaries, and head waters. Now, some of the head waters of the Columbia are above both those points (one is above 54°) which she is endeavoring to steal from us as capital with which to buy the joint navigation of a river at whose mouth, on the north, (and I am informed there are insuperable obstacles to there ever being a town on the south,) there must, some day—and that not far distant—be one of the most opulent and important cities in the world. And, were we to adopt as our doctrine that by which England justified her driving the Spaniards from the Falkland islands, the Dutch from New York, or the Swedes from Delaware, we should not only annul the article for joint occupation, but should order her from the territory forthwith.

The country, for the most part, is well interspersed with prairie and timber, so as to facilitate settlements; and the river regions, particularly abundant with heavy timber, furnishing spars equal to those of New Zealand, which are unsurpassed by any in the world. And the mouth of the Columbia is within twenty days' sail of Peru or Chili, which are destitute of all ship-building materials. The number of beautiful sites for large towns along navigable streams, and along others possessed of unequalled water-power for moving manufacturing machinery, is very great. The streams abound with salmon weighing from 25 to 50 pounds, and 10,000 barrels can be taken out per annum, without diminishing the stock. The Wallamette valley, where the Methodist mission is, is larger than the State of New York, and is said to be the finest country in the world; and, though it is all below the most southerly point claimed by Great Britain, yet the Hudson Bay company have driven the settlers from the valuable mill-sites at the falls of that river, which were much needed, and which, from their costly improvements, they were poorly able to lose. Such is its grasping avarice, which we are called upon to check. The character of the country more immediately about the Oregon is too well known to need description. But, says Slacum, "aside from the Columbia and Wallamette valleys, the other valley furnish 14,000,000 acres of as good land as can be got in Illinois or Missouri." The climate, though various in the same latitude, is much milder, and more uniform west than east of the mountains; and ploughing is done almost all winter, and now and then there is a winter when the ground never freezes, during all the time, enough to interrupt the progress of the plough. And every kind of produce raised in our western States is more easily raised here, unless it may be Indian corn, which seems not a favorite with the Oregon soil. It is, however, the finest in the world for tobacco and hemp. To all these facts, which give importance to that country, let it be added that it is within thirty days' sail, over an unruffled ocean, of China and the East India seas, and ten of the Sandwich islands; and it would be of great advantage to us, our Pacific fisheries, if we had an American town and a strong fort at the mouth of the Columbia. And it is not an over bold prediction, that there now are, on the stage of action, those who will live to see steamboats making their regular trips from the mouth of the Columbia to Canton.

To give instances of the iniquity practised by the Hudson Bay company, additional to their driving our settlers from their mill-sites on the falls of the Wallamette, I will mention that, in the country which they expect England to get, they have laws for the preservation of game; such as forbidding being killed out of season, &c.; whilst in the country which they expect will fall to us, they pursue the game at all times, with a manifest desire to exterminate it. Again, there is the same difference with respect to their treatment of the Indians in the two sections, committing every kind of depredation upon those of the one, so as to make them quarrelsome and hostile, whilst they are using all the soothing arts of peace with those of the other. The company have already taken possession of all the eligible spots for factories, mills, or towns; and, even south of the Oregon, they have forts out of which they realize something like \$500,000 per annum. They have nineteen forts south of the Columbia. They too, are cutting all the timber that they can from the south side of the Columbia; so that, if England

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ping timber from her. Among the perquisites
claimed by the company, is the important one of
doing all the trading, all the buying and selling in
that country. The company lay aside a certain
percentage of their annual profits, to be used for
the express and avowed purpose of keeping Ameri-
cans out of trade; and this has been time and time
again used to persecute Americans who dared to
deal in furs. Indeed, they once sentenced a respect-
able American to wear skins for a number of years
for violating one of their arbitrary, unholly, and op-
pressive regulations concerning trade. And the
main study of the company is, how it can best for-
tify itself in view of the gushing tide of emigration
which they well know must eventually overrun the
country. The Cape and Tongue points are two
perfect Gibraltors on the Columbia; and this com-
pany has already taken the latter, as they are pre-
paring to do every eligible spot on that river for
commanding its navigation.

In view of these facts and considerations, our
only safe and politic course is in doing as we did
by the original great northwest territory, and as we
are now doing by Florida, Wisconsin, and Iowa.
We should extend our jurisdiction over Oregon,
and give it a territorial government, and let the
patry thought that such a course may give um-
brage to Great Britain pass by unheeded. And
this we should do, although the gentleman tells us
that Lord Packenham is coming. But how does
he know that he is coming to treat on this subject?
Perhaps he may be coming to make some remun-
eration for the burning of the Caroline, or the kidnap-
ping of Grogan. For my part, I hope he is. To
add to our terror on this occasion, to frighten us out
of our sympathies for the exposed Oregon pioneers,
the gentleman from Kentucky has told us that,
about the time our last treaty was made, Great
Britain had paraded about our coast a whole line
of steamships, ostensibly for carrying the mails to
East India, but really for battering down our cities,
as they were loaded with cannon, cannister, powder,
balls, grape-shot, and other ammunition of war. I
always wondered at the late treaty, and so have our
western friends generally. We never have been
able to account for it. The gentleman did not tell
us that our treaty-making powers got a peep into
those West India mail-bags. But he has told his
story, and left us to draw our own inference. My
blood boils with indignation at the utterance of such
sentiments, knowing, as I do, that these remarks of
an American congressman will give a hint to
Great Britain how she can get another treaty signed
to suit her purposes, *always providing that the right
folks are at the head of our government.* "Give ear, oh
heavens! attend, oh earth!" hush, ye senators and rep-
resentatives! Lord Packenham is on his way to Ame-
rica; and very likely he may take along those West
India mail bags for timid treaty-makers to look into,
and see the dread preparations for war, and then be
terrified into a wanton surrender of their own citi-
zens—a sale of a valuable part of their country. Sir,
I hope if, in any event, this noble lord should as-
sume a hostile attitude, as in days of yore, there
will not be those on our coast to burn blue lights in
order to give his cannon the proper direction for the
most mischief and destruction. But I have my
fears; since, let what question arise that will, there
are always some that instinctively espouse the
British side. For one, I have no concern for any
disadvantageous effects arising from the discussion

of this question, even if Lord Packenham does
come; and let him come—and come to take the
mouth of the Columbia, too, if it so please him. We
have had one Packenham on a visit to our shores,
with a view to take the mouth of another celebrated
river; and does the gentleman remember the warm
reception he met with, and the result of his nego-
tiations? He found more cannister and grape here
than he brought in his mails; and, before he could
effectually open his despatches for our government,
he was despatched to another world, and his fol-
lowers were despatched in hot pursuit, except a few
who were despatched home on an errand of mercy.
And the opinions and sympathies with reference to
our treatment of that Packenham, and his British
and American allies, were expressed a few days
since by the members of this House by their votes
on the bill to refund General Jackson's fine. We
then saw who favored the conqueror of Packen-
ham the first. Now, if Packenham the second
has come to take the mouth of the Columbia river
by negotiation, by diplomacy, by threats, by the ex-
hibition of more East India mails, or by main force,
I predict that another Jackson will rise up to defend
it against the ravages of an infamous crew, whose
rallying cry is "beauty and booty," and also to im-
prison the Halls, the Loualliers, and such other
traitors as may appear. I will not, I cannot stop
to count the cost, as the gentleman has, when our
country's rights are invaded; when our citizens are
hourly exposed to the brutal massacres of the In-
dians; when persons entitled to the protection of our
government are repeatedly arrested, and cruelly
punished, and sometimes unrighteously executed
by a mob court, instituted at the will of the Hudson
Bay company, which is immediately interested in
driving every one of our citizens from the country.
Instead of keeping quiet, I think it our duty to
speak freely and candidly, and let England know
that she never can have an inch of Oregon,
nor another inch of what is now claimed as
the United States territory. I go further yet, sir;
and I say that she never can have Texas or Califor-
nia. If she entertains any such expectations, they
are delusive. England has run her race on the
American continent. Henceforth she is to be the
loser and not the gainer in any instance. Once
again let Canada strike for freedom, and the liberal
spirit of the age, the republican sentiments of our
people, will not tolerate our government in sending
another "peace establishment" to our northern fron-
tier, to embarras the struggling sons of freedom by
keeping American sympathies this side the line.
With England in possession of Texas, what are we
to expect from our cotton trade? Again: with her
in possession of California and the fertile plains of
Oregon, how soon vanish our golden dreams of com-
peting with the whole world in bread stuffs?—how
quick is gone our sanguine hope of supplying all
China with tobacco, and of carrying on the most
profitable and extensive trade with the Sandwich is-
lands, the East Indies, and, indeed, with the whole
Pacific country? Sir, England already has Canada
on our north. Now give her Oregon and California
on the west, and Texas on the south, and, with her
present force on the Atlantic, what should we be
but a mere island, surrounded in every direction by
British territory and British power? Sir, I may be
a fanatic on this subject, but I candidly believe God
never made an inch of America to be a colony of
Great Britain or any other government. I never
could make up my mind that He designed the utter-

most portions of this section of the earth, at least, for her inheritance. I have ever looked upon America as the land of promise—as the terrestrial paradise which should know tyranny and oppression only by name. I have ever believed all of America destined as “the land of the free;” and I hope our action on this all-important question will show to the world that the United States, at least, is still “the home of the brave.” As against Great Britain or any other government, we can rightfully take possession of Oregon; and I am for doing so immediately, and for passing such laws as will hold out the greatest inducements for speedy emigration to that country.

When old Ethan Allen took possession of a British fort, and his authority was demanded, he replied, “by the authority of Almighty God and the continental Congress.” Religious enterprise, missionary zeal, has done the most that has been done, thus far, for the settlement of Oregon. Hence (I say it with due deference) the Almighty God bids us onward to take Oregon; and all we are now asking for, is the authority of the present, though not the continental, Congress. We chastized Great Britain in our infancy; we did it again soon after we were one and twenty; and why fear her now, whilst in our full strength, in demanding our rights? Sir, in behalf of the West, where no such fears are entertained, I close by bidding Lord Packenham and Great Britain defiance. That nation, and that name, can strike no terror to our hearts whilst the battle of New Orleans, fought under so many adverse circumstances, is fresh in our recollection. Or, that occa-

sion, they both, with all their importance and all their pretence, were weighed in the balance against the patriotism and valor of a few unpretending Americans, and found grossly wanting. England may flatter herself that she will yet divide the Elysian fields of Oregon with us; but she might as well set in motion another Hartford convention, to divide this glorious confederacy, cemented by the blood of our fathers. She may dream of the joint possession of the navigable waters of the mighty Columbia. In that same mad dream may she well include the possession of the great Mississippi, and all its tributaries. Does she entertain the faintest hope of ever holding any portion of Oregon in peace? Let that hope be based on her first procuring a surrender of our national Capitol. But stop—the figure is too weak. She has once had this Capitol in her possession. Before she holds Oregon in peace, she must first extinguish the spirit of liberty springing perennially from every American heart. That land is ours by original discovery, and also by original possession. It is ours by our own right, and also that of several nations, conveyed to us by solemn treaties—all with paramount claims to Great Britain. If one inch of it is ours, it is all ours; for we hold it all by the same tenure. It is all ours, or there is none of it ours. Let it all go together. The true mother, in the Scripture, could not consent to the division of the child. And, as a last request of our treaty-making powers, the American people say, cut not in twain, for purposes of disgraceful peace, our darling territory.

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